

American Opinion Summary

Department of State

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No. 96

October 5, 1962

CUBA

The proposed closing of U.S. ports to foreign vessels carrying weapons and munitions to Cuba is heartily applauded in initial comment. This is a program "that might materially reduce the Soviet bloc's military and economic support" of Cuba "without risking an armed collision or violation of international law," declares the New York Times. To the Philadelphia Inquirer, such an "economic crackdown appears to be the best means at hand to demonstrate" to the world "what a shabby farce" the Castro regime really is.

To bar from American ports all ships of any country, any one of whose ships is transporting military goods to Cuba, declares the Washington Post, "can demonstrate to the Europeans that Washington does not see the Cuban conflict in terms of a feud with a flyweight dictator but rather as a direct confrontation with Soviet power."

With the Philadelphia Inquirer, the New York Herald Tribune agrees that "these steps can be expected to produce some practical results"; but the two also strongly emphasize that the present Cuban situation directly involves the security of the entire free world, and that even the transport of non-military Soviet goods in Allied bottoms releases Russian craft to carry military goods and men to Cuba. Therefore, the Herald Tribune concludes, "still stronger measures may be required to achieve our aim"; we "can and may yet blacklist all foreign ships, Allied or otherwise, and ban them from any and every American port if they continue to help Russia conquer Cuba."

The Latin American foreign ministers' condemnation of the Soviet presence in Cuba wins high praise in most early comment. Their action "recognized the essential prerequisite in warding off the political dangers emanating from Castro's Cuba," the New York Times declares (also, N.Y. Herald Trib.). "Despite expectations to the contrary, the meeting did yield important results" in its "admirable show of unanimity" and the avoidance of "weasel words" in the communique, the Washington Post asserts (similarly, Wash. Star).

But the Scraps-Howard papers conclude that the OAS ministers "obviously do not agree with the U.S." concerning Cuba. The "calmly philosophical" meetings displayed "no perceptible concern" about the danger, and Secretary Rusk "was unable to get any important commitment," complains the Washington News, adding: Even the communique's commitment to non-intervention "would seem to equate U.S. intervention with Soviet intervention."

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